

sense of a fair salary for that part of the country. Salaries can be state secrets, but colleagues will be helpful in orienting you. Insist on having all benefits spelled out in writing, especially when it comes to tenure-track or long-term employment options, leaves and sabbaticals, funding for conferences and equipment, course load, and the like. All of this varies enormously around the country, in small schools and large, for undergraduate and graduate programs, to say nothing of the range in the nonprofit sector or publishing.

The basics are the same: Know that your bargaining power is at its peak when the institution wants you, wants to conclude the search, and wants you to sign immediately. That is the time to call your friendly lawyer for advice and ask the potential employer for your wish list. Most women have not been socialized for asking for what we want or need. This is the point at which your advisor and your friends will be of great assistance. Then get it all in writing to prevent future problems.

Counter offers (see also Negotiations)

The negotiation process may involve offers and counter offers, that is, a package of wages and benefits made by one institution that will be matched or at least responded to in some way by another. This can happen in the hiring process, though in the present climate it is unusual. It is more likely to occur when one is already in a position, for example in the academic world in a tenure-track position but not yet promoted, or for other reasons is not entirely satisfied with the situation. Looking elsewhere is tricky business as it can send a mixed signal to your current employer. However, if you are given an offer, your current employer may decide to match or better it as a way to keep you on board.

The key to this whole process is maintaining integrity, keeping people informed while at the same time looking out for your best interest. A lawyer may be helpful in sorting out contractual details that will affect your decision. In any case, the real winner in these cases is the person who acts honorably.